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ABSTRACT

Two important schools of thought in the teaching of writing are those of the "writing workshop" and "critical pedagogy." Both encourage expression on the part of the student, but while writing workshop advocates assume that the student writes from a stable, unitary, autonomous self, the critical pedagogy advocates do not. Writing workshop advocates see the teacher as a facilitator of the student's expression; though he or she may intervene, strategically, in the technique of students' writing processes and texts, he or she is not to critique what the student writes. Viewing the self as a social category developing in a multicultural context, however, critical pedagogy advocates encourage teacher criticism. Like writing workshop advocates, critical pedagogy advocates have not come to terms with the very real, problematic nature of the conflicts among voices in the classroom, both between teacher and student and among students themselves. At least two aspects of teacher practice are in need of further examination and development. First, more attention must be paid to the immediate classroom community within which students speak and write. Educators must look critically at what sorts of classroom communities they think are desirable and what sorts of actions they can take to create and sustain those environments. Second, more attention must be paid to the teacher's response to student writing. If the writing workshop view of "following the child" is inadequate because it does not allow for the possibility that the child's text will pursue questionable intentions and attitudes (concerning race, gender and social class), then viable means of teacher intervention in the expressive process must be proposed. (Contains 9 notes and 40 references.) (TB)

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Writing for Critical Democracy:

Student Voice and Teacher Practice in the Writing Workshop

by

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Writing workshop approaches to writing instruction emphasize providing opportunities for children to engage in and practice the craft of writing. A central theme within such approaches is increased student control over writing processes and texts--students have wide powers to determine the topics, audiences, purposes, and forms of their writing. Such control is in the service of student voice. With the support of the teacher and numerous opportunities to collaborate and share texts with peers, children are supposed to gradually become more and more able to express themselves in written text.

Like advocates of writing workshop approaches to the teaching of writing, I think that the idea of voice--especially student voice--should be an important part of our plans and efforts for improving the education of our children. In what follows, I explore and criticize the conception of voice put forward by writing workshop advocates (eg., Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986, 1991; Graves, 1983; Murray, 1985). I also critically examine the conception of voice put forward by advocates of critical pedagogy (eg., Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Freire, 1970, 1985; Giroux, 1988; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Simon, 1987).[1]

The main title of my paper--"Writing for Critical Democracy"--is also the working title of a larger book project I am pursuing. My goal in this project--a goal that has not, for the most part, been taken up by workshop advocates--is to link the teaching and learning of writing in schools more closely to a critical democratic vision of schools and society. In this paper, I summarize what I have learned so far in my work on the concept of student voice. First, I characterize and contrast writing workshop and critical pedagogy versions of voice. Then, I examine a serious weakness that is shared by both workshop and critical pedagogy treatments of voice. Finally, I point to several aspects of teacher practice in the writing classroom that will need to be rethought, given new understandings of student voice.

Voice in the Workshop and Critical Pedagogy

Workshop approaches emphasize the work of finding your own voice in your writing. Finding your voice involves looking to your own experiences for what it is you have and want to say. Calkins (1986), for example, asserts that we write in order to "turn the chaos into something beautiful" and "to uncover and to celebrate the organizing patterns of our existence" (p. 3). The image is one of burrowing deep into subjectivity, to discover your authentic, unique nature, and a voice that expresses who you are.

Workshop advocates do not only assume that it is a good thing to tap into and express your real, authentic self in your writing. They also assume a particular conception of the *self* to be tapped: a traditional Enlightenment conception, in which the self is imagined to be stable, unitary, and autonomous.[2] Thus far, workshop advocates have paid little attention to the serious criticisms this conception of self has received from, among others, psychoanalytic and feminist theorists (see Flax, 1990). As Willinsky (1990) has noted: "The self, as that pure and singular essence of our being, is no longer a reliable figure in the psychological or literary landscape" (p. 220). This unreliable figure carries workshop advocates' conception of voice.

Advocates of critical pedagogy assume no such self. For them, the self is a social one, created out of the cultural resources at hand. This does not mean that the self is envisioned as *determined* by these cultural resources, in the strong sense that the passive individual becomes whatever is dictated by an overpowering social context. The resources available--the experiences, languages, histories, stories--obviously constrain the possible selves you can become. At the same

time, they provide possibilities, possibilities that can be more or less consciously worked in the creation of a self. As Emerson (1986) expressed it: "One makes a self through the words one has learned, fashions one's own voice and inner speech by a selective appropriation of the voices of others" (p. 31).

The space for choosing, for fashioning yourself out of the words of others, is enlarged by the complexity and plurality of the social contexts of our lives. No environment, as Dewey (1983/22) noted, is "all of one piece" (p. 90). Instead, society is marked by a multiplicity of cultures, meanings, and values. Advocates of critical pedagogy would have us pay attention not only to this plurality, but also asymmetries of power across this diversity--asymmetries of power that enable powerful groups to define their own particular meanings, experiences, and forms of writing and reading as *the* valued ones in society (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991).

For critical pedagogists, dominant groups determine dominant meanings, but not without a struggle, and never once and for all. In fact, the larger educational and political project of critical pedagogy is exactly to empower students to engage in this social struggle over meaning. The conception of voice in critical pedagogy is linked to this project.

For advocates of critical pedagogy, voice signals *participation*, an active part in the social production of meaning. If the workshop sense of voice is evoked with the contrast, "my words versus someone else's words," then the contrast to voice within critical pedagogy is silence, where silence points to oppressive conditions that keep certain people from speaking and being heard. Rather than emphasize the attempt to distinguish yourself from others, voice, here, emphasizes inserting yourself and your texts into public spheres.

Another way to contrast writing workshop and critical pedagogy versions of voice, then, is in their relations to democratic theory. If we think of democracy in terms of liberty and popular sovereignty, then the workshop commitment to voice is concerned primarily with liberty, especially freedom of thought and expression. In the main, voice in critical pedagogy is linked to the goal of popular sovereignty, to making power "accountable . . . to those affected by its exercise" (Bowles & Gintis, 1987, p. 4). Critical pedagogy is concerned to have students be active participants in the construction of their worlds, rather than trapped in the meanings, subjectivities, and forms of authority determined by powerful others.

Voice also serves different functions within the pedagogical schemes of writing workshop approaches and critical pedagogy. For workshop advocates, voice is a goal, an endpoint, a criteria with which to judge the success of the writing and instruction. Without that stamp of individuality--without, as Graves (1983) put it, "the imprint of ourselves on our writing" (p. 227)--the writing and teaching have failed. Within critical pedagogy, however, voice is less a goal or endpoint in itself, and more a starting point for collective work to be done by the classroom community.[3]

Student voices are a starting point in that they make available a multiplicity of texts that can be examined, learned from and criticized. Critical pedagogy's emphasis on voice, then, is very much in the spirit of Dewey's (1980/1899) call for a transformed recitation. In the traditional recitation, individual students answered teacher questions for the purpose of displaying what they had memorized from the textbook in a competition for teacher rewards. Dewey imagined a different sort of recitation, one where the recitation

> Becomes the social clearing-house, where experiences and ideas are exchanged and subjected to criticism, where misconceptions are corrected, and new lines of thought and inquiry are set up. (p. 34)

Advocates of critical pedagogy and writing workshops also embrace contrasting teacher stances in relation to student voice. Within critical pedagogy, individual student's voices are assumed to arise from a social self, shaped and created in social contexts of great diversity. These voices--like the voices of teachers, curriculum-developers, novelists, scientists--are assumed to be necessarily partial, express a particular position on the world that will make possible certain

understandings and constrain others. Consequently, critical pedagogists say, over and over again, that student voices must not only be affirmed, but also *questioned*. As Giroux (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991) put it:

> It is not enough for teachers merely to dignify the grounds on which students learn to speak, imagine, and give meaning to their world. Developing a pedagogy that takes the notion of student voice seriously means developing a critically affirmative language that works both *with and on* the experiences that students bring to the classroom. This means taking seriously and confirming the language forms, modes of reasoning, dispositions, and histories that give students an active voice in defining the world; it also means working on the experiences of such students in order for them to examine both their strengths and weaknesses. (p. 104; author's emphasis)

Nowhere do workshop advocates even hint that teachers should take up a critical position vis-a-vis reports of student experience and the meanings students make with their texts. Workshop advocates point to a stance that has the teacher intervene, strategically, in the technique of students' writing processes and texts. But writing teachers are to ignore the intentions and meanings of children's work, except to help students pursue them more effectively (Lensmire, 1993).

Gilbert's (1989a, 1989b, 1994) work helps us understand this lack of critical attention to meaning. She argues that the notion of personal voice in workshop approaches ties student text and student tightly together. One consequence of this merging of text and student is that student texts "are seen to be so closely aligned to the individual child and that child's original making of meaning that they are 'beyond criticism'" (1989a, p. 198). In other words, any criticism of the meanings students make with their texts can be interpreted as a disparagement of or attack on the person of the student.

Gilbert also points to some of the trouble that this notion of personal voice gets us into. For what if the authentic student voice is, say, a sexist one, as in an example Gilbert (1989a) provides from a Year 5 writing workshop in Australia? Gilbert tells of the collaborative effort of four 9-year-old boys who wrote themselves into their own fictional story of war and destruction. They made themselves heros, of course. They also wrote seven girls from the class into their tale. Six of these girls are given stereotypical roles in the story--"having 'affairs', holding hands with boys, getting married, saying 'I love you'"--before becoming victims of war, disposed of in "reasonably ugly ways" (p. 200). The one girl to escape the textual fate of stereotype and death happens to be the biggest girl in the class. In the story, she jumps on top of the enemy and scares them off for a while. She also gets called "Super Blubber." As Gilbert notes,

> No need to kill off this female: her size and aggression have effectively excluded her anyway (what worse fate for a girl than to be called Super Blubber?). (p. 200)

Are we, as workshop advocates seem to suggest, to marvel at this exploration of the world by these young boys, and help them make it work even more effectively?

It should be obvious that I find much about critical pedagogists' treatment of voice attractive and persuasive. I value their assumption of a social self developing in multicultural contexts. I affirm, in general, the critical democratic project they are pursuing. Within this perspective, voice is conceived of in terms of participation in the construction and reconstruction of the world and the ways we make sense of it. And advocates of critical pedagogy avoid an uncritical stance in relation to student meaning-making.

But writing workshop and critical pedagogy versions of voice also share important similarities (Giroux, 1987). Both would have student voice flourish in the classroom. Both seek to humanize teaching and learning in schools through the acceptance and affirmation of student voice. Both encourage the active exploration by students of their worlds, rather than passive

submission in the face of teacher control and knowledge.

Unfortunately, critical pedagogy and writing workshop conceptions of voice also share at least one serious weakness: Neither has come to grips adequately with what *conflict* among voices--conflict generated among students, between teacher and students, and within individual students--means for the actual production of speech and writing within classrooms. In the end, neither workshop advocates nor advocates of critical pedagogy embed student voice in the immediate social context of the classroom, and consequently, they ignore important problems and issues attending the speech and writing of students there. Writing workshop advocates embed voice in the inner context of the author's intentions, desires, dreams, experiences; when the social context of the workshop is considered at all, it is only as a friendly one that supports individual students' expression. Critical pedagogy advocates embed voice in politics and history writ large, rather than within the local meanings, values, and relations--the micropolitics and microhistories--of particular classrooms.

Voice and Classroom Conflict

In my own teaching and research in a third grade writing workshop--work influenced by both writing workshop and critical pedagogy perspectives--I found that the local peer relations among children were extremely important influences on children's activities and texts in the classroom, and not always in positive directions (Lensmire, 1993; Lensmire, 1994). Children used the relative control they exerted over their own movement and writing processes within the workshop to divide themselves up along gender and social class lines. Girls conferenced and collaborated with girls, boys with boys. And middle-class children tended to work within shifting groups of middle-class friends, and to avoid association with the working-class children who lived in a large trailer park in the middle of the mainly suburban community this school served.

Instead of the uniformly supportive workshop context that workshop advocates imagine, individual children felt they were confronted with multiple peer audiences that they judged to be more or less supportive, *more or less hostile*, to their attempts at expression. In other words, children, especially unpopular children, felt that there were serious risks involved in writing for peer audiences--risks to their sense of self, to what they valued and cared about, to their social standing in relations with others. Children's responses to these risks included seeking out certain classmates for writing conferences, and avoiding others. In their writing, children avoided genres and topics that they felt involved too much exposure of self. Some children chose not to insert themselves and their texts into public spaces within the workshop, spaces such as sharing time and the workshop library--spaces created exactly to allow all children's voices to sound and be heard within the classroom community.

Unpopular children (mostly from the trailer park, a few not) felt these risks most keenly. The upshot is that children--not just teachers--can silence children's voices in classrooms. One of the most unpopular children in the class summarized it this way. When asked why most children felt comfortable sharing their work during sharing time and she didn't, she replied: "Because they have lots of friends."[4]

If possibilities for conflict and risk attend peer relations in classrooms, they also attend relations between teacher and student, even when the teacher rejects traditional practices and embraces workshop or critical pedagogy approaches to teaching and learning in classrooms.

McCarthey (1994) provides a worthy example in her story of Anita, an 11 year old girl in a 5th/6th grade writing class in New York. Anita's teacher, Ms. Meyer, was inspired by Calkins' (1991) discussion of writers' notebooks to have her students keep notebooks of their own. When it came time for Anita to write a piece from her notebook, she thought that she might write about her experiences at camp. Her teacher, however, worried that such a topic lacked impact and focus, that Anita would be unable to write about these experiences with the sort of powerful, personal

voice workshop advocates call for. After an examination of Anita's notebook, Ms. Meyer thought that material concerning Anita's relationship with her father could be developed into a strong piece, and she encouraged Anita to write about that.

Ms. Meyer was in good workshop form. She carefully read Anita's notebook, and tried to help Anita identify a topic--within the realm of Anita's own experiences--worthy of Anita's attention and effort. She didn't demand that Anita write about her father, but did *encourage* her to do so.

Now Anita had a problem, for she didn't want to write about her father. Anita hadn't spelled it out in her notebook, and Ms. Meyer didn't know: Anita didn't want to write about her father because he physically abused her and her brother. But how can she not write about this topic and still please her teacher, Ms. Meyer? And if she doesn't want to tell Ms. Meyer about her relationship with her father, she can't even reveal her real reasons for avoiding this topic.

Eventually, Anita came up with a fairly ingenious solution to her writing problem. She wrote about someone who was close to her, but not abusive--her grandfather. This allowed her to fulfill Ms. Meyer's seeming desire that she write about her relationship with an important person in her life, without exposing certain facets of her personal life to public scrutiny.

Let me draw one moral from this story: encouragement is sometimes not far from coercion in the classroom, given unequal power relations among teachers and students. The institutional authority of the teacher in school does not just go away when that teacher chooses to engage in alternative teaching practices; it remains for the student to negotiate with the teacher, or work through, or (as in Anita's case) work around. It's a complicated business.

It's a complicated business that is passed over too quickly in critical pedagogists' calls for the questioning of student voice in the classroom. Anita and Ms. Meyer's story suggests that simply supporting student voice in classrooms may be hard enough to accomplish.[5] Advocates of critical pedagogy ask teachers to support *and question* student expression. In questioning student expression from their position of authority in the classroom, teachers once again run the risk of shutting down, silencing student voice in the classroom. Rather than pushing classroom participants' thought and action forward to increasingly critical evaluations of their world, such questioning could encourage students to not speak their mind, or to look for the correct thing to say to please the teacher. Although advocates of critical pedagogy recognize asymmetries of power across teacher and student, they have, as Ellsworth (1989) asserts, "made no systematic examination of the barriers that this imbalance throws up to the kind of student expression and dialogue they prescribe" (p. 309). At times, critical pedagogists seem overconfident that student voice will flourish in the face of questioning.

In addition to conflict among peers and between teacher and student, advocates of writing workshops and critical pedagogy have largely ignored the inner conflict and struggle students often face when speaking and writing in classrooms. Workshop advocates recognize that the writer faces difficulties in capturing complex experiences in words, difficulties in finding outer words to express inner meanings. But their conceptions of self and writing make it difficult to address the inner conflicts that attend having to use *others'* words, when those others are different from, opposed to, and more powerful than you.[6] Bakhtin (1981) noted that

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent. . . . And not all words for just anyone submit easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them . . . it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker. (p. 294).

Stephan Daedalus, the young Irish protagonist of James Joyce's (1976/16) *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, expressed it this way, in his inner reflections on a conversation he was

having with an English priest (who was also a dean at his school).[7] Their discussion was moving, somewhat haphazardly, through questions of esthetic theory and how to light fires and lamps, when the two discovered that they used a different word to name the same object--Stephan called the priest's "funnel" a "tundish." The priest, with a courtesy that Stephan thought rang false, called tundish "a most interesting word" and repeated it several times to himself. For Stephan, this "little word seemed to have turned a rapier point of his sensitiveness against this courteous and vigilant foe," the priest. Although English is the shared native tongue of both Stephan and the English priest, Stephan believes that

> The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *Christ*, *ale*, *master*, on his lips and mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language. (p. 189)

Advocates of critical pedagogy, with their assumption of a multiple, social self, certainly are in better position than workshop advocates to recognize the inner struggles of Anita and Stephan. When Giroux (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991) writes that one's voice "constitutes forms of subjectivity that are multilayered, mobile, complex, and shifting" (p. 100), he is pointing to a conception of voice that is not far from acknowledging inner conflict in the production of speech and writing in schools. Unfortunately, critical pedagogists have not usually pushed this far. Their conception of voice, as Ellsworth (1989) notes,

> does not confront the ways is which any individual student's voice is already a "teeth gritting" and often contradictory intersection of voices constituted by gender, race, class, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or ideology. . . . It is impossible to speak from all voices at once, or from any one, without traces of the others being present and interruptive. (p. 312)

I should take care here. I am not saying that classrooms are always and necessarily hostile places for student voice. Teachers and students can work together in ways that lessen risks and that address the conflicts they confront. Classrooms can be better places, learning places. Many already are, and sometimes they are supported by the visions of workshop and critical pedagogy advocates.

Classrooms can be better places, and we have a moral obligation, as educators, to make them so. But just because we are working to make them better doesn't mean that students don't confront problems in expressing themselves in classrooms, problems originating in conflicts with peers and teachers, in difficult choices of who they will be in relation to school and a larger, heterogeneous social world. I'm not trying to be a glass-half-empty person. I'm arguing that if our ideas of something better are linked to the flourishing of student voice in classrooms, then our theorizing and efforts to make things better have to account for the risks and problems students face in expressing themselves there.

Stated a little differently: We work for something better; as we do, our students still confront what is not yet better. We have to acknowledge that, in ways that workshop advocates and critical pedagogists have not.

Obviously, the above calls out for an alternative conception of voice, one that draws on the strengths of previous work by workshop and critical pedagogy advocates, but that locates voice more firmly in the immediate social context of the classroom. This is what I am in the middle of trying to do, with the help of Bakhtin (1981, 1986) and others who have used Bakhtin's work to inform their own writing on voice (e.g., Dyson, 1992; Kamberelis, 1986; O'Connor, 1989; Ritchie, 1989).[8] Instead of providing a beginning sketch of that work here, however, I will

conclude my paper with some comments on teacher practice in the writing classroom. For conceptions of teacher practice are bound up with conceptions of student voice. If we see voice differently, then we will have to imagine teacher practice differently as well.

Concluding Comments: Student Voice and Teacher Practice

At least two aspects of teacher practice are in need of further examination and development. First, more attention needs to be paid to the immediate classroom community within which students speak and write. If, as Harris (1989) asserts, we "write not as isolated individuals but as members of communities whose beliefs, concerns, and practices both instigate and constrain, at least in part, the sorts of things we can say," (p. 12), then we had better pay attention to the classroom communities we create. Future work will need to explore both 1) what sorts of classroom communities we think would be desirable, and 2) what sorts of actions we can take as educators to create and sustain such classroom communities within schools.

In previous work (Lensmire, 1994), for example, I proposed that workshop teachers and students be guided by a vision of what I called an engaged, pluralistic classroom community. An engaged, pluralistic classroom community is one that recognizes and affirms differences among children, and encourages children to learn from, be enhanced by, those differences. I adapted this vision of classroom community from Bernstein (1988). In his text, Bernstein characterized what he called the "ethos of pragmatism" in the writings of Pierce, James, Dewey, and others. An important theme of the pragmatist ethos, for Bernstein, was the vision of a community of inquirers that supported critical thought and action by its members.

A shortcoming in my work, however, was that I did not take up in any detail how we might actually promote such classroom communities. Ironically, the writings of workshop advocates are filled with concrete suggestions for how to help teachers and peers interact in helpful ways around text, but their work does not connect these suggestions to a vision of community. Workshop approaches have aligned their goals with individual children's intentions, without considering that the ends some children pursue may not be beneficial for other children, or even themselves (remember the young boys in Gilbert's example above). Consequently, when things don't go as planned--when students don't act the way they are supposed to according to writing workshop scripts--teachers are left to their own resources and visions in adapting workshop procedures and suggestions to local circumstances. Certainly, many teachers adapt in ways that we would applaud. But our work could certainly benefit from careful explorations of what sort of classroom communities we want, and how we might create and sustain them.

A second aspect of teacher practice in writing classrooms that is in need of revision is teacher response to student writing. The workshop conception of teacher response--what Graves (1983) calls *following the child*--emphasizes following and supporting children's choices of topic and purpose for writing. Such a conception, however, ignores the problem of children pursuing questionable intentions and material in their texts, such as when children's texts affirm--even if unintentionally--gender, race, and social class stereotypes and boundaries.

In response to such problems, I developed a second conception of response that drew heavily on the work of critical pedagogy advocates (Lensmire, 1993). I also looked to psychoanalysis--especially the accepting *and* critical stance that the analyst takes in relation to patients' stories--and began thinking of teacher response as a type of analysis. But not one supported by Freudian theories of the unconscious, repression, and resistance: I looked to the "socio" rather than the "psycho," to the workings of language, culture and power in the lives of speakers and writers, and conceived of teacher response as "socioanalysis." Response as socioanalysis assumed that traces of racial, class and gender oppression would, at times, find their way into the stories children told.

There are, however, problems with this conception of response. The critical teacher stance I created with the notion of socioanalysis proposed reading and responding to children's texts as abstracted artifacts of an oppressive larger society. This sort of response is important if we want to help our children avoid modes of thought and action that perpetuate these aspects of our society. But in the end, socioanalysis, like following the child, is inadequate, because it does not concern itself with local politics, the micropolitics of the classroom, and how children's texts might operate there.

In my thinking about teacher response to children's texts, I had realized that children in writing workshops made important curricular decisions for themselves, and that some of the material they might work with required critical evaluations by them with my help. However, I had thought of children's decisions about curriculum as private ones, affecting only individual children's work for the duration of individual projects. I had not considered how children's stories became *curriculum for other children* in teacher-sponsored events and classroom practices that encouraged (and required) children to listen to and read carefully the texts of other children (Gilbert, 1989a). With the help of critical pedagogy advocates, I had thought of "questionable" material in children's texts as the unfortunate traces of societal politics of class, race, and gender. And with the help of critical pedagogy advocates, I had ignored how children's stories participate, for better and for worse, in the micropolitics of the classroom.

It is disturbing enough to realize that children's texts might reflect, in some way, differences in status and power among groups in society, and among groups of children in the classroom. But we must also consider the active role texts play in producing and maintaining these relationships. Texts are rhetorical, have effects in the world. They can influence others' conceptions of themselves and their worlds, make them laugh, hurt them, make them feel connected to others, safe or unsafe, encourage them to speak and write or remain silent. Such is some of the work children's texts do in our writing classrooms.

Future work on teacher response will have to confront the rhetorical play of children's texts within the classroom community.[9] If it is to intervene helpfully in the production of student voice in classrooms, teacher response will have to concern itself with the consequences of children's texts, both for the children who write them, and those who read them.

Notes

1 My own work and thinking have been most concerned with elementary schools. So, for me, the writing workshop advocates who have been most influential are people like Donald Graves, Lucy Calkins, and Nancy Atwell. Donald Murray, though more closely identified with college composition, has also been important, because his work introduced me to workshop approaches. As for advocates of critical pedagogy: Paulo Freire, Ira Shor, Henry Giroux, Roger Simon, and bell hooks have probably been most influential. It seems, however, at least in my reading of these writers, that Giroux has given the most explicit attention to the idea of voice, and, consequently, my comments on voice in critical pedagogy are based largely in his work.

2 For Berlin (1988), workshop advocates embrace an "expressionistic rhetoric" that is the descendant of both Rousseau and Romantic responses to nineteenth-century capitalism. This rhetoric assumes an autonomous, stable self who takes up relations with the world in order to make sense of it and her or himself, and is characterized by a radical individualism that portrays the individual as the source and final arbiter of what *is*, of what is *good*, and of what is *possible*. It is

not that the reality of material, social, and linguistic aspects of the world are denied, but that

> They are considered significant only insofar as they serve the needs of the individual. All fulfill their true function only when being exploited in the interests of locating the individual's authentic nature. (p. 484)

Expressionistic rhetoric's critique of society emerges from this demand that the material and social contexts of the individual support the pursuit and discovery of personal meaning. Berlin argues that this rhetoric has been closely tied to psychological theories that assert the inherent goodness of the individual, and that within expressionistic rhetoric, this inherent goodness is, of course, "distorted by excessive contact with others in groups and institutions" (p. 484). That is, all too often, social relations and institutions (such as schools) corrupt human nature and demand conformity to petty social convention, rather than provide the supportive backdrop for a flourishing individuality.

3 I am simplifying a bit here, with the characterization of voice as endpoint in writing workshop and voice as starting point in critical pedagogy. Workshop advocates will sometimes talk of voice as a driving force or essential ingredient in the writing process itself (Graves, 1983). Thus, voice is linked not only to a quality of the text produced, but to the assumed natural desire to express the self. Within critical pedagogy, voice is sometimes used to suggest a desired endpoint in the development of the individual, as when Giroux (1988) calls for "a voice capable of speaking in one's own terms, a voice capable of listening, retelling, and challenging the very grounds of knowledge and power" (p. 71).

4 With the help of the regular classroom teacher, I tried in a number of ways to make the workshop a safe, supportive place for all children, with limited success. I examine, in detail, the responses of children to peer relations in this workshop in Chapter 4, "Peer Audiences and Risk," and Chapter 5, "Fiction, Distance, and Control," of Lensmire (1994).

5 See Florio-Ruane (1991) and Ulichney & Watson-Gegeo (1989) for helpful discussions of the difficulties teachers and students face when they try to transform traditional teacher-dominated talk in writing conferences.

6 Soliday (1994) provides a solid overview of research and an excellent account of the inner struggles students face in working across cultures in their school writing.

7 I got this Joycean example of inner conflict over language from McDermott's (1988) wonderful piece on "Inarticulateness."

8 I expect that a recently published book, *Voices on voice: Perspectives, definitions, inquiry* (Yancey, 1994), will also help me in my work to develop an alternative conception of voice (as well as provide complications, challenges, and inner struggles I could probably do without).

9 See Lensmire (1993) for an alternative conception of teacher response to both following the child and socioanalysis, based in the work of critical pragmatists such as Cherryholmes (1988).

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